



# **SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYING YOUR PERSONAL ASSISTANTS**

**A Workshop Series for People with Disabilities**

## **PARTICIPANT HANDOUTS**

**Workshop III, Session 3:**

### **Finding Personal Assistants**

## Workshop III: Finding and Hiring Personal Assistants Goal & Objectives

◆ **Workshop III Goal:** After completing the three sessions of this workshop, which include:

- ◆ **Session 3:** Finding Personal Assistants
- ◆ **Session 4:** Preparing to Staff
- ◆ **Session 5:** Hiring Personal Assistants

Participants will have the knowledge and skills they need to begin recruiting and hiring their personal assistants.

◆ **Objectives:** After completing this workshop, participants will be able to:

- ◆ Advertise, pre-screen, interview, and hire personal assistants (PAs) who best match and support their needs and preferences; and
- ◆ Communicate effectively with potential PAs, using active listening skills, including asking open-ended questions and paraphrasing.

# Getting Started— *Looking for Personal Assistants*

IN TODAY'S SESSION, WE WILL....

- ❖ Learn about how to use the **PLANNING AND PREFERENCE LISTS** to inform our plan for hiring personal assistants
- ❖ Explore different ways and **SOURCES** of finding people to interview
- ❖ Learn about using **ADVERTISEMENTS** to find personal assistants and practice making our own ads



- ❖ Discuss how to use phones and **PRE-SCREEN** candidates during the hiring process

**Friends and family  
members make the  
best personal  
assistants.**



# Seven Steps to Follow When You Hire a Personal Assistant

✓ **Done**

## ☐ 1. **Advertise.**

Use your description as a guide to create an ad. Remember to include word-of-mouth outreach!

I have a great job!



## ☐ 2. **Pre-screen candidates on the phone.**

Pay attention to your first impression.  
Which ones would you like to meet?



## ☐ 3. **Interview candidates in person.**

What do you think now? Are they comfortable with your job description and staffing plan?



## ☐ 4. **Assess candidates after the interview.**

Are any of the candidates close to your ideal PA?  
What did you like best about each candidate? Least?



## ☐ 5. **Check references.**

What do others think about the candidates? Would they hire or work with the candidates again?



## ☐ 6. **Offer the job to the candidate who is your first choice.**

Ask the candidate, "Would you like to work for me?" If she or he accepts ask, "When could you sign a hiring agreement and start?"



## ☐ 7. **Contact the rejected candidates.**

After signing a hiring agreement with a PA, call other candidates to say, "Thank you, but I've found another person who suits my needs, so I won't be offering you the job now..."



# A Fictional Consumer's Snapshot

*SAMPLE FOR SHERRY*

## Daily I would need:

## Notes:

**Shower:** For safety reasons I have a shower chair.

**Assisting with dressing/getting clothes ready:** I CAN do some things.

**Setting my hair:** I know daily seems like a lot, but I really like to have it done every day.

**Housekeeping:** Doing dishes, helping me make my bed/change linens.

**Exercise:** I like to ride the stationary bike, and I'd like you to be around just in case I need assistance getting on/off.

## A couple of times a week (or as specified):

## Notes:

**Vacuuming:** I have a cat and it gets a little hairy!

**Pet care:** Help me change the cat's litter box.

**Assist with local errands:** Groceries, laundry, mailbox, pharmacy, etc.

**Cooking:** I can make sandwiches and soups but I need some help with larger meals when I have guests or just want something homemade and hot.

## Weekly I need:

## Notes:

**Cleaning:** Full apartment—dusting, mopping, linens, etc.; I want to help where I can, but doing it on my own is tough.

**Errands with me:** Accompany me on outings around town so I can have help carrying and picking up things, etc.

## My Most Important Personal Preferences:

I prefer working with a woman, someone strong and healthy, a non-smoker and non-drinker. I go to church so I'd like a religious person. She HAS to have a sense of humor and can't be someone who is shy and afraid to speak up. I want someone who can express her own needs as well. I'd love to get someone who can cook some good Southern cuisine, but it's not vital. I definitely want someone who can braid hair. I drink every once in a while, so she may have to purchase alcohol for me. I'd like someone who is trained (maybe a CNA) but I'm not against showing her the ropes myself if she doesn't have this training.

**Workshop III, Session 3: Finding Personal Assistants**  
**Handout 5, Option 1 of 3: A Fictional Consumer's Snapshot and Rough Schedule: SHERRY**

**Rough Schedule Based on the Snapshot for Sherry**  
**Total Hours a Week: 42**

<b>Day of the Week:</b>	<b>Mon.</b>	<b>Tues.</b>	<b>Wed.</b>	<b>Thurs.</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Sat.</b>	<b>Sun.</b>
<b>ADLs/ Medical Morning</b>	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours
<b>ADLs/ Medical Evening</b>	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours
<b>Other (errands, laundry, house-keeping)</b>	2 Hours for errands and groceries	1 Hour for house-keeping	3 Hours for errands and groceries	3 Hours for laundry	1 Hour for house-keeping	2 Hours for errands and groceries	2 Hours for house-keeping
<b>Daily Totals:</b>	6	5	7	7	5	6	6

# A Fictional Consumer's Snapshot

## *SAMPLE FOR IRENE*

Daily I would need:	Notes:
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**Pet care:** I need help feeding the animals and want my caregiver to pet them too.

**Exercise:** I will be doing my therapy exercises and want help in case I have trouble.

**Driving Assistance:** To physical therapy, the library, card games, church, and for shopping.

A couple of times a week (or as specified):	Notes:
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**Assistance with dressing:** I CAN do most things, and only need help when I'm getting dressed up.

**Shower:** For safety reasons I have a shower chair.

**Cleaning:** Vacuuming and sweeping because of my dog and two cats

**Pet care:** Help me change the cats' litter box.

**Health care:** Diabetes testing.

Weekly I need:	Notes:
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**House cleaning:** Assistance with dusting, mopping, laundry, etc.

My Most Important Personal Preferences:
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I want a person who is smart, well-read, efficient and quiet. Not too young. Definitely he or she can't smoke. They have to be a good driver and be respectful and courteous to me and all of my friends. I can't stand someone who is fidgety. They also need to dress respectably. No holey jeans, and women have to have nice pants and long enough skirts, no low cut blouses. They must look presentable. They can't be a chatterbox!! I'd prefer someone who has taken care of a family member before and who knows about diabetes, but I can explain it to a thoughtful person.



**Workshop III, Session 3: Finding Personal Assistants**  
**Handout 5, Option 2 of 3: A Fictional Consumer's Snapshot and Rough Schedule: IRENE**

**Rough Schedule Based on the Snapshot of Irene**  
**Total Hours: 21**

<b>Day of the Week:</b>	<b>Mon.</b>	<b>Tues.</b>	<b>Wed.</b>	<b>Thurs.</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Sat.</b>	<b>Sun.</b>
<b>ADLs/ Medical Morning</b>		2 Hours			2 Hours		1 Hour
<b>ADLs/ Medical Evening</b>							
<b>Other (Driving)</b>	2 Hours	2 hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours
<b>Cleaning</b>		2 hours					
<b>Daily Totals:</b>	2	6	2	2	4	2	3

# A Fictional Consumer's Snapshot

## *SAMPLE FOR ENRIQUE*

### Daily I would need:

### Notes:

**Urinary program:** Removing and cleaning catheter, draining and rinsing drainage bag, attaching, etc.

**Range of motion exercises:** Stretch Achilles, toes, hips, hamstrings.

**Body washing and hair care**

**Dressing and undressing**

**Transferring into wheelchair:** Chair needs to be plugged in at night and unplugged in morning.

**Preparing food and assisting with eating**

**Housekeeping:** Doing dishes, making bed, tidying up.

**Organizing house for day:** Music, reading materials, computer supplies, snacks.

**Bowel program**

### A couple of times a week (or as specified):

### Notes:

**Driving:** Groceries, pharmacy, bank, community activities, etc.

### Weekly I need:

### Notes:

**Full house cleaning.**

### My Most Important Personal Preferences:

I need a well-trained professional who listens and is responsive to how I want things done. A person who thinks they know the right way to do things won't work for me. Dependability and competence are a must. I also hope to have someone who appreciates that I'm living a full life despite my paralysis and that I'm active on behalf of people with disabilities and other peace and justice efforts. It would be wonderful to have someone smart with whom I could talk about these issues. I also want someone who can be friendly and easy with my daughter and friends. If someone is good with equipment repair and computers, that's a great plus.

**Workshop III, Session 3: Finding Personal Assistants**  
**Handout 5, Option 3 of 3: A Fictional Consumer's Snapshot and Rough Schedule: ENRIQUE**

**Rough Schedule Based on the Snapshot of Enrique**  
**Total Hours a Week: 50**

<b>Day of the Week:</b>	<b>Mon.</b>	<b>Tues.</b>	<b>Wed.</b>	<b>Thurs.</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Sat.</b>	<b>Sun.</b>
<b>ADLs/ Medical Morning</b>	3 Hours	3 Hours	3 Hours	3 Hours	3 Hours	3 Hours	3 Hours
<b>ADLs/ Medical Evening</b>	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours	2 Hours
<b>Other (driving, house-keeping)</b>	2 Hours	2 hours	3 Hours	2 Hours	4 hours	2 Hours	
<b>Daily Totals:</b>	7	7	8	7	9	7	5

# Snapshot of Me

**Daily I would need:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Hours:** \_\_\_\_\_

**A couple of times a week (or as specified):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Hours:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Weekly I need:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Hours:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My Most Important Personal Preferences:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Workshop III, Session 3: Finding Personal Assistants**  
**Handout 6: Snapshot of Me and My Rough Schedule, page 2 of 2**

**My Rough Schedule Based on My Snapshot**

**Total Hours a week:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Day of the Week:</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tues.</b>	<b>Wed.</b>	<b>Thurs.</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Sat.</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
<b>ADLs/ Medical <i>Morning</i></b>							
<b>ADLs/ Medical <i>Evening</i></b>							
<b>Other (errands, laundry, house- keeping)</b>							
<b>Daily Totals:</b>							



## Ways to Find PAs

Source	Pros	Cons



## More Ways to Find PAs

**Your own community**—Friends, family, peers, current PAs

- Ask them to help spread the word
- Post ads on bulletin boards at shopping centers, laundromats, coffee shops, bookstores, ATMs, food co-ops, etc.

**Newsletters and leaders of groups you belong to**

- Place job posting on bulletin boards at churches, temples, and synagogues or with other groups who share your interests
- Ask leaders if they know people to refer to you or if they have other ideas that might help you find a PA

**Newspaper advertisements**

- THINK LOCALLY!, e.g. college, town and community newspapers

**Centers for Independent Living, Area Agencies on Aging and advocacy organizations**

- Check registries or lists of workers

**Community and local colleges and training centers**

- Target especially colleges and training providers with health related programs. They may have career centers to place ads for students and CNA or Home Health Training programs

**Community health centers or clinics, day care sites, nursing homes**

- Post ads on bulletin boards to attract a staff member looking for extra hours

**Registries/Hotlines/Internet** (e.g. Craigslist.com, online support communities for people with disabilities, etc.)



## **WHAT TO INCLUDE IN AN ADVERTISEMENT:**

### **Details that make the job appealing**

- ☐ Attractive or flexible hours
- ☐ Interesting person to work with
- ☐ Easy location to get to
- ☐ Rewarding work
- ☐ Benefits

### **Important information to include:**

- ☐ Hours and days of work
- ☐ Pay
- ☐ General description of responsibilities
- ☐ General location (never give out your home address!)
- ☐ Phone number to call for information about the job





# Creating an Advertisement

Appealing Details	Important Information

**What *NOT* to Include:**

***An advertisement for me might look like:***

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## Sample Ads

### **Personal Assistant Needed**

No training needed; \$8.50/ hour, about 20 hours/week. Help young guy in w/c with personal care needs + running errands; computer skills and interest in rap music a must. Close to public transportation. Call Rob at xxx-xxxx.

Help woman with disability \$9/hr on near east side; assist woman in basic personal care and getting to school; no early morning hours! Start at 10 am; must be nonsmoker who likes cats; call Michelle, leave message xxx-xxx-xxxx.

### **Looking for College**

**students** to help disabled young mother get ready in the morning, assist with personal care, errands, housecleaning. Must enjoy kids. \$10/hour, 20 hours a week (7 am-11 am). Near campus. Call Renee at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

### **Need someone 40**

**hours/wk. F/T** work with health insurance and other benefits. Personal assistant needed to help with dressing, bathing, laundry, house-keeping. Need to be willing to go to work with me—assist in typing, making phone calls—in a great work environment. Must love dogs! \$9/hour. Call Tracey if interested at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

**Personal Assistant Needed** for weekends. \$8 hour/8 hours. Assist older, lively woman with personal care, shopping, and other errands. I love to go downtown to hunt for bargains and need person to assist on weekends only! Perfect for college student. Call Monique at xxx-xxx-xxxx.



# Phone Pre-Screening

Advantages	Disadvantages



## Phone Pre-Screening

*After placing the following ad in the local college newspaper, Skip De Graff received a number of responses on his answering machine.*

*As you read the responses, think about which people, if any, you would consider calling back—and which ones, if any, you wouldn't—and why. Check "yes," "no," or "maybe," depending on which answer is closest to your thinking. Then, rank the "yes" votes in order of preference, with #1 as your first choice.*

### The Advertisement

#### **\$9/hr to Help Man with Disability**

Get experience working with a disability. Cool, active guy who uses wheelchair needs help with living activities, 6-8 hrs weekly. Just 10 min. from campus (car required), routine easy to learn. Needed now. Call Skip today & lv message, 000-000-0000.

### The Messages

- (1) "I'm calling about the ad for your live-in position. My name is Jennifer, but I'm really calling for a good friend of mine. He's really a nice, gentle guy who's interested in this job. Please call me back at xxx-xxxx and I'll be glad to tell you more about him."

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Maybe      Rank: \_\_\_\_

- (2) (Happy, bubbling, warm voice) "Hi, Skip. My name is Christy, and I saw your ad. I'm 28 years old and a first-year grad student in occupational therapy at SIU. I would like the experience of working with a person with a disability who has the positive attitude you seem to have from the ad you placed. I think I could learn a lot from working with you. Could you please call me at xxx-xxxx? Again, my name is Christy, and I hope to hear from you."

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Maybe      Rank: \_\_\_\_

**Workshop III, Session 3: Finding Personal Assistants**  
**Handout 10: Phone Pre-Screening, page 3 of 4**

- (3) "Ah, yeah (sniff), I'm callin' 'bout the disabled who wants someone (cough, cough) to care for him. My uncle was on crutches for a while, so working with them doesn't bother me none. Call me and we can talk 'bout what he needs. Thanks." (No name or phone number.)

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Maybe      Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

- (4) (Clear, pleasant voice) "Hello, I'm calling for Skip. I'm Sarah, a 38-year-old massage therapist here in town. I would like to supplement my income and would be glad to provide you with references. Please call me at xxx-xxxx so I can learn more about your needs and the hours you require. Thank you very much."

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Maybe      Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

- (5) "My name is Heidi and I'd like to know more about the disabled gentleman who needs help. I think these people are so brave and inspiring. I've helped out several of them before. Yes, I have access to a real good car; my current boyfriend says I can use his. Please call me at xxx-xxxx, Suite 110."

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Maybe      Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

- (6) (Quiet, pleasant voice) "Hello, Skip, my name is Lea. I'm a 42-year-old single mom with two daughters. I've done some home health aide work before. If you would please return my call, I would like to discuss what needs you have. Please call me at xxx-xxxx. I'll look forward to hearing from you."

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Maybe      Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

- (7) (Rushed, very fast, mumbled message) "This is Erin, saw your ad, 'm interested, xxx-xxxx."

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Maybe      Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

- (8) (Nervous, respectful voice) "My name is Jenny. I'm a 19-year-old sophomore, pre-veterinary student at BU. I would like to speak with Skip about the help he needs. I grew up on a ranch in Wyoming. I'm used to getting up early, and I'm a hard worker. Please call me at xxx-xxxx."

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Maybe      Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

## Phone Pre-Screening –



★ ***Tips to Remember:***

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## Questions to Ask When I Call Back:

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## My Homework: Sources to Recruit PAs

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How to Recruit There:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Whom to Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone/Email/Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Costs:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Details:** \_\_\_\_\_

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How to Recruit There:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Whom to Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone/Email/Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Costs:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Details:** \_\_\_\_\_